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ABSTRACT

As community colleges increasingly move to internationalize their curricula, to accommodate more foreign students in their classrooms, and to engage in technical assistance projects in other countries, they will find themselves at the very center of major issues in the field of international education. One of the most urgent of these issues is the preparation of Americans to function in an interdependent world. America's effectiveness in international business, in foreign policy, in the management of domestic issues with international implications, and in numerous other areas is largely dependent upon an internationally aware citizenry. Community colleges can make a special contribution stemming from their strong commitment to linking academic studies with the world outside the classroom, their flexible and innovative approach to educational problems, and their philosophy of lifelong learning. Another issue in international education is meeting the educational needs of foreign students on U.S. campuses. Currently, U.S. two-year colleges enroll approximately 40,000 foreign students, and 91% of these students are from developing countries. With a foreign student population of this nature, community colleges have a key role to play in helping all U.S. schools think through the complex tasks of educating foreign students, determining appropriate numbers of foreign enrollments, ensuring that foreign students are well integrated in campus and community life, making certain that the curriculum is relevant to student needs, and ensuring that appropriate continuing education and lifelong learning opportunities exist for foreign students who have returned to their own countries. In these and other ways community colleges can contribute significantly to the strengthening of the entire international education enterprise. (AYC)

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THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY COLLEGES TO INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Richard Krasno
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New York, New York

Speech delivered at the 8th Annual Conference on
International Education
Lake Buena Vista, Florida
February 12-15, 1985

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Richard Krasno
President
Institute of International Education

The Contributions of the Community Colleges to International Education

Speech Delivered at the 8th Annual Conference
on International Education
Sponsored by the Community Colleges for International Development, Inc.
February 12, 1985

It is indeed an honor and a pleasure to be here with you at this unique conference site to give the keynote address at the Eighth Annual Conference on the community college and international education. "Keynoting," it seems to me, is a particularly welcome task, offering the speaker both the opportunity to range freely over a number of topics, and the challenge of finding that "fundamental or leading idea"--the definition of a keynote according to Webster's unabridged dictionary--that will link those topics together.

I must confess that my first thought was to speak tonight about the critical importance of international education--about the need to expand exchange programs, to infuse curricula with an international dimension, and so on--by taking as my "leading idea" the contributions that international education can make to the community colleges. However, as I began to prepare this address and reflect on the role the community colleges have played in American education over the past several decades, it became clear that a number of major issues confronting those of us who work in international education were precisely those on which the community colleges had already developed considerable insight and experience. Perhaps this has been done in a slightly different context, or with a somewhat different emphasis, but I am convinced that the experiences of the community colleges can speak directly to a number of the special concerns of those of us involved more generally in international education.

It struck me, then, that it would be far more interesting to turn the idea around--to focus not so much on what international education can bring to the community colleges, but rather on what the community colleges can bring to international education.

Let me be a little more specific. In his provocative book, The Community College: Values, Vision, and Vitality, Edmund Gleazer discusses several of the leading concepts that have guided the community college movement: the concept of access, and the subsequent diversification of the student body; the concept of lifelong learning, which emphasizes that education is a continuing process, for all age groups; the concept of community orientation, which stresses links between the college and individuals and institutions outside of the traditional academic setting; and the concept of adaptability--the capacity to respond to new conditions, demands, or circumstances.

These concepts, it seems to me, are ones that can also provide a great deal of guidance on matters relating to international education. Thus, in tonight's address I would like to focus on several areas in which I believe the community colleges--with their special mission that Gleazer so well described and with their wealth of concrete experience--can help strengthen the processes of international education. Indeed, as community colleges increasingly move to internationalize their curricula,

to accommodate more foreign students in their classrooms, and to engage in technical assistance projects overseas, they will find themselves at the very center of major issues in the field, well-poised to make a major contribution to our understanding of these issues--and to our ability to deal with them effectively.

[I. Educating Americans for an Interdependent World]

What are some of these issues?

I think we are all in agreement that one of the most urgent tasks facing us is that of educating Americans to function in an interdependent world. People no longer reside only in a local community: They are members also of a global community. And in a democratic society such as ours, it is imperative that all citizens understand the significance of developments that happen outside our own borders--that they free themselves from parochialism and comprehend the complex and diverse ways in which what happens in the world impinges on us. Indeed, America's effectiveness in international business, in foreign policy, in the management of domestic issues with international implications such as agricultural policy, and in numerous other areas is largely dependent on an internationally aware citizenry.

Perhaps the most dramatic evidence of how interdependent our lives have become is on the economic front. Business is now by and large an international pursuit. More than 6,000 U.S. companies have some form of operation overseas; international trade accounts for approximately 25% of our gross national product, compared with 11% in 1970 and just 5% in 1940; about one-third of all U.S. corporate profits are now produced by international activities; one out of six production workers depends on international trade for employment; and two out of every five acres of farm land in the United States are producing for export. Moreover, as a nation we are becoming increasingly dependent on imports for many vital supplies. For example, it is predicted that by the year 2000 the U.S. will have to import 12 out of 13 minerals needed for a modern industrial society.

Markets are growing larger and more diverse, the labor force in many industries is becoming more and more international, and competition has become global in nature--and therefore much stiffer. Recent Fortune 500 lists of the leading corporations show that of the top 50, approximately one-half are foreign-based and owned. And a business does not have to be large to be internationally involved: Delegates to the 1984 Conference on Small Business pointed out that small enterprises, too, are increasingly being faced with the need to compete in world markets. Indeed, corporations are among the chief generators of interdependence, and are certainly among its chief beneficiaries.

However, in order to be considered a well-educated person, simply to understand this fact of the international nature of business is not enough. One must also know how particular foreign practices and cultural values affect economic relations, and if one is concerned with practical career objectives, one must very often also know how to function effectively and without blunder in an alien social and linguistic environment.

This last point touches on a most important matter, one which the community colleges may be especially well-positioned to help out on. As part of its Research Program, IIE has just published a study by Stephen Kobrin of N.Y.U. entitled International Expertise in American Business, which examines ways in which U.S. managers acquire international expertise, the perceived value of that expertise to business operations, and the need for and availability of future managers with such skills. One of the study's most important findings was that although a demand for international expertise exists, and will no doubt grow in the future, there are decreasing opportunities for its cultivation, at least in the ways that international expertise has traditionally been developed among corporate employees. The current senior generation of managers generally acquired this expertise through earlier overseas assignments rather than through academic study. But today opportunities for such expatriate assignments are decreasing as companies rely more and more on foreign nationals to manage overseas subsidiaries.

How, then, will the emerging generation of managers and corporate employees become interested in and knowledgeable about things international? How will they develop the international expertise they will need to be effective? How will Americans learn to function with intelligence and sensitivity in a firm that is multinational? And it is not only country knowledge in the sense of information about economic, political, and social environments abroad that is needed, but also awareness of cultural differences and the ability to deal with, and manage, a wide variety of people.

As expatriate opportunities decrease--at the very same time that the need for international expertise is increasing dramatically--it is clear that we shall have to make use of methods to develop an interest in and understanding of the world outside the U.S. that do not depend on having an expatriate experience as a corporate employee.

The burden falls, of course, on the educational system. Many community colleges share with the four-year institutions an interest in internationalizing curricula, which is one very fundamental way that an understanding of other countries can be stimulated among Americans. Infusing an international dimension into curricula, and doing it in a way that does justice to the

material and that does not oversimplify, is a critical but no easy task that depends largely on the competence and commitment of the faculty at the institution involved. I know it has been done particularly well at Broward Community College here in Florida and at Bergen Community College in New Jersey. The former's efforts resulted in the development of a series of new instructional units, a selection of which were published in the enormously helpful volume edited by Seymour Fersh and William Greene, The Community College in International Education: A Report of Progress (Vol. II). Bergen's efforts have focused particularly on meeting the needs of the surrounding county's business community for well-trained personnel in international marketing and import and export management, and are described in some detail in the recent book by Earl Backman, Approaches to International Education. The experiences of both these colleges are well worth examining, and can serve as valuable models for similar efforts elsewhere.

It seems to me that the community colleges, in addition to dealing with the content of curricula, can also make a special contribution to the process of internationalization, stemming from their strong commitment to linking academic studies with the world outside the classroom, the flexibility and innovative spirit with which they approach educational problems, and their philosophy of lifelong learning. In short, if Americans are to

become internationally knowledgeable, they must have a variety of opportunities and mechanisms for doing so, and the ability to gain new or to augment existing knowledge at various stages in their educational development and career training. Partly it is a matter of reaching not just college-age students, but adult learners who have been out of school for some time but no less than our young people can benefit personally and professionally from a greater international awareness. Partly it is a matter of making sure that courses are available that are responsive to new situations. For example, as opportunities for increased interaction with China grow, there will be a concomitant need for courses dealing with the people and economy of that complex country. And partly it is a matter of ensuring that there are opportunities for practical experience--that students learn not only from books, but from life. The community colleges have pioneered in these areas, and their concrete experiences in developing specialized short courses and certification programs, work-study programs, and continuing education for midcareer learners and part-time students, can guide all educators in designing diverse ways of fostering international expertise among Americans.

I also want to say one word specifically about study-abroad. If it is true that the new corporate employee will have little chance for an international experience once he or she has been

hired--and certainly that is true for most other occupations--then it is particularly important that there be opportunities for study abroad for the college-age student--during both the summer and the regular academic year. Indeed studying abroad can have a profound impact on an individual and can help to develop a general structure for understanding different cultures that can then be applied to subsequent situations. To quote the Kobrin study on how this point relates to those who will pursue careers in business:

> A large component of the international expertise that effective international management requires is what I have called general and comparative expertise. Most managers understand that differences do exist, that Mexico City is not Moline. They also need to learn that the differences are often systematic: that is, people, cultures, and countries vary along a number of specific dimensions such as directness in interpersonal interaction, the willingness to trust strangers, conceptions of time, political openness, and economic centralization. While it may be impossible to develop in-depth knowledge of every country one deals with, one can learn the major dimensions along which variation occurs--in culture, in social custom, in business practice, in political and economic organization--and the range that variation can encompass. (p.51)

A study experience abroad, especially when a person is still in his or her formative years, can go a long way to providing this type of understanding. A number of community colleges have moved to make international study available to their students and several have been especially active in pursuing the "consortial" approach, such as that represented by the Community Colleges for International Studies, which grew out of the excellent work of Rockland Community College in promoting study

abroad. Such consortia are extremely efficient means of enabling more students to have an international experience. I would like to see such consortia expand, reaching out also, as several already have, to embrace four-year institutions.

Although in making reference to the Kobrin study I have been focusing on the business world, I certainly do not mean to suggest that an international perspective is not required in other areas. Indeed, to be a truly educated person in today's world--with its complex technologies and rapid means of communicating vast amounts of information, its contending ideologies, traditions, and moral points of view, its daunting social problems, and ever present threat of nuclear war--an international perspective is essential. Approximately 40% of all U.S. undergraduate students are enrolled in community colleges, and so it is especially important that these students be reached. As pointed out in the Fersh and Greene volume mentioned earlier, and I quote:

> For many students, the community college is their final experience with formal education. If community colleges do not reach these students with international education programs, then massive numbers of Americans will lack the fundamental understanding of the interdependent world necessary for effective citizen action. Faced with the opportunity of reaching such a large percentage of the American public, the community college has a special responsibility to make international education a priority. (p.4)

I heartily concur with this. The contributions of the community colleges are already substantial; they are to be applauded for their achievements--and encouraged in their continuing efforts to develop effective, innovative approaches to this critical task of educating Americans for interdependence.

* * * * *

[II. Foreign Students in the United States]

Let me now turn briefly to another, equally important topic in international education: the education of foreign students on our college campuses.

According to the latest Open Doors, two-year institutions [that is, community and junior colleges and technical institutes] now enroll approximately 40,000 foreign students--or 13% of all such students in the United States. Perhaps the most striking fact is that 91% of these students in the community colleges are from the developing world--approximately 71% from Africa, Latin America, and Asia, and the remaining 20% from the Middle East. [For four-year institutions, the figures are similar but not

quite as dramatic: 85% are from the developing world, with 67% from Africa, Latin America, and Asia and 18% from the Middle East.] The largest contingent of foreign students at community colleges is the Latin American group, which accounts for almost 30% of all the foreign students in two-year institutions, compared with 14% in four-year institutions.

Clearly, with a foreign student population profile of this nature, community colleges have a key role to play in helping all American educational institutions think through the many complex issues raised by having foreign students--the overwhelming majority of whom are from developing nations--on our campuses.

What are some of these issues?

One particularly thorny set revolves around the number of foreign students and the makeup of the student population at any single given institution. Should the number of foreign students on campus be increased? stabilized? decreased? Should consideration be given to diversification of the foreign student body in terms of country of origin, socio-economic status, age, field of study, or gender (and increases or decreases aimed for

accordingly)? What are the benefits of diversity, and how does one determine the mix that optimizes those benefits--and then go about achieving the appropriate proportions?

These are important questions because the quality of the educational enterprise will be affected by the performance of the foreign students at any institution, and because the personal experiences of the American students and their understanding of different cultural values and attitudes will be affected by the kinds of encounters they have with foreign students. Foreign students will also be affected--too few on campus may lead to feelings of isolation; too many, particularly from one country, may lead to problems of "ghetto-ization," and so on.

These questions center around <u>who</u> is to be educated. There are also a host of related questions centering around the <u>objectives</u> of that education--how are the goals of overseas study defined and whose goals are they? While many objectives may be held in common or at least be overlapping, there can also be quite pronounced differences in the educational objectives of the student, his or her home country, the receiving institution, and, if there is one, of the sponsoring agency, such as AID. Additional questions center around our understanding of what

"development" means and around the balance to be achieved between American interests, including the value of exchanges to our foreign policy, and those of the sending countries and their students.

Let me come down from this rather general level to a very specific issue: that of curriculum relevance. If an institution accepts foreign students, does it have an obligation to adjust its curricula, if necessary, in the interest of meeting these students' needs? Or is its responsibility to its American students? This is, of course, stating the matter too much in terms of an "either/or," for although there does seem to be a very common acceptance by U.S. faculty that no fundamental changes should be made in the traditional core curricula, this does not mean there are no ways to achieve "relevancy." This whole subject was treated with great clarity in a NAFSA report of several years ago entitled The Relevance of U.S. Education to Students From Developing Countries. The report drew attention, for example, to the concept of the "complementary curriculum," which involves, to quote, "the selection of inter-disciplinary studies, special courses and skill training in an additional program designed specifically to take into account the varying needs in different disciplines and the available resources in different countries." (p.4)

I believe we do have an obligation to meet the needs of the foreign students whom we accept into our institutions, and the development of such a "complementary curriculum" is one way for institutions to be responsive. In connection with this issue of relevance, I should also note that there is a real and growing need to develop opportunities specifically for practical experience for the foreign student before he or she returns home. Indeed, a recent NAFSA-commissioned study on the needs of foreign students from developing countries at U.S. colleges and universities by Motoko Lee identified as "least met" the need for such practical experience [Needs of Foreign Students from Developing Nations at U.S. Colleges and Universities, p. 131].

The community colleges have a wealth of resources to bring to bear on these matters. Because of their tradition of flexible adaptation to practical needs and because they have already developed innovative curricula in other areas, the community colleges can and should assume a lead role in designing appropriate courses and programs for the foreign student. Moreover, the ties that community colleges have with the local community, especially business enterprises, can provide the appropriate contacts and mechanisms for integrating work experience into the study program of foreign students in this country. And with AID's increasing emphasis on the private sector and on economically disadvantaged groups, we are seeing more and more a need for opportunities for technical and

vocational training in the U.S.--for programs that combine classroom-bound teaching with internships, apprenticeships, and other forms of experiential learning in local firms.

Community colleges are ideally suited to respond to these needs and may prove to be especially appropriate places of study for foreign students, offering the varied arrangements, individualized instruction, and hands-on "situational" training that increasing numbers of such students seek and need. For students of limited means or who cannot be away from their home country for long periods of time, the two-year institution can offer a variety of courses and short-term programs carefully targeted at specific study and career objectives. And for the midcareer professional, with an interest in additional training to complement his or her existing expertise, such programs in the community colleges, particularly non-degree arrangements, may be especially relevant.

Finally, and related to this last point, it seems to me that there is a major problem faced by those from abroad who have studied in this country after they return home. A study undertaken by Craufurd Goodwin and Michael Nacht for IIE on the impact of American education on Brazilians [Fondness and Frustration: The Impact of American Higher Education on Foreign Students with Special Reference to the Case of Brazil], found

that one of the major problems they faced was the "decay" of their competencies some years after return. Goodwin and Nacht are now doing a follow-up study in Indonesia, Mexico, and Turkey on effective approaches to the prevention of decay (or put more positively, to the maintenance of competencies), but certainly one mechanism would be the arrangement of short-term courses of study in this country to provide intellectual refreshment and retraining.

The justification for such programs is based on an "educational philosophy," so to speak, that the community colleges have consistently espoused: that learning is a lifelong, continuing process, that it does not simply occur at one point in life and then stop. The concept may seem obvious, but the fact of the matter is that our traditional colleges and universities have often ignored the point. Obviously, this is to the detriment of our own country's students, but it particularly affects foreign students, especially those from developing nations where opportunities for ongoing professional stimulation and development may be few and far between. Considering the time, energy, and substantial funds (either the student's or the sponsoring agency's) invested in a U.S. education, the deterioration of the precious human capital represented by the American-trained foreign student would be a tremendous loss for all concerned.

In addition to special programs, the development of linkages between institutions here and abroad is another important way to reinforce and and reinvigorate training. The Community Colleges for International Development (CCID--the sponsor of this conference) has done pioneering work in establishing contacts overseas and in providing technical assistance and vocational training to developing country nationals. We will all watch with interest to see what additional programs and associations are developed by this leadership group of institutions in the future.

So far, I have confined myself to speaking about education and training--what goes on in the classroom or in some other setting in which the primary objective is the cultivation of knowledge, expertise, or skills. But this is only one dimension of the educational experience. A major factor that has been identified as especially important in contributing to successful overseas study is the extent to which a foreign student has contact with host country representatives and the opportunity to interact with local people and local culture. Foreign students frequently speak of the isolation they feel while studying here and of their disappointment and discouragement in finding it so difficult to get to know Americans. The findings of Otto Klineberg and W. Frank Hull, in their study of foreign student adaptation and coping [At a Foreign University: An International Study of Adaptation and Coping], strongly support this view that facilitating personal contact is crucial to the success of the whole exchange enterprise, both academically and nonacademically.

Clearly, this is an area in which much work must be done. Foreign students need and want more contacts with Americans, a chance to meet with people in their homes or in local community activities, to discuss significant issues with local individuals, and to become involved with community life. In this area, it seems to me that the initiative must be taken by the host society--and the community college, because it already interacts with a wide variety of local institutions, is especially well-positioned to develop programs that will enable foreign students to have a fuller and more positive experience in the U.S., and to come also, perhaps, to a better understanding of our country's complexity and marvelous diversity. The importance and long-term benefits of the networks that may be formed in this process should not be underestimated.

Of course the value of such interaction rests not only in how much it can enrich the experience of the foreign student. Americans, too, can be enriched through such contact. Indeed, foreign students may be viewed as educational and cultural resources, and although we must be careful not to make the mistake of treating them as "specimens," there is clearly much we can learn by reaching out to students from other countries and involving them more intimately in everyday American community life.

Programs such as those organized by Brevard Community College and Rockland Community College, which arrange for foreign students to participate in such activities as tutoring Americans in the student's native language, providing advice on travel to their home country, meeting with church and civic groups, and acting as resource persons in local public schools have been especially successful in bringing foreign students and Americans together outside the classroom--and helping thereby to bring greater intercultural awareness to our own citizens.

In a sense, then, we have come full circle, returning to the topic raised at the beginning of this address, that of the importance of broadening the international perspective of Americans. Although I have confined myself to only two of the components of "international education"--internationalizing the awareness of Americans and non-traditional ways of meeting the educational needs of foreign students on our campuses--and have sketched out only a few on the salient issues involved, I hope I have made my case for the important role the community colleges can play in helping us grapple with these, and other matters.

Because you have long extended educational opportunities to a wide variety of individuals, have long viewed education as

relating to all aspects of life, and have long encouraged us all to live more effectively in the world, with a deepened understanding of self and others, it seems to me that many of the most important issues we face in international education intersect at the community colleges. This provides both a challenge to those of you who want to link the community college mission with an international mission, and an opportunity to contribute significantly to the strengthening of the entire international education enterprise, thus serving all of us who are concerned to see it thrive in the future.

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